

# 4

## Economic Development

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### Introduction

Economic development refers to the policies and programs that support local employment and foster sustainable growth. The objective of economic development policies is threefold: to promote local job creation; to support job retention; and to ensure that the local workforce is suitable for local job opportunities. This can be achieved through business recruitment or creation, workforce recruitment and training, and through improvements to the commercial building stock through infrastructure investments, services, and real estate development.

This section discusses revitalization of the Main Street corridor in Webster and other key economic development issues identified during the Master Plan public outreach process. The economic profile of Webster presents the existing condition of the labor force, business establishments, and industry growth in the Town as well as regional economic development resources and programs.

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### Economic Development Goals

This section presents goals for economic development and downtown revitalization in Webster over the next twenty years. These goals can be achieved at the local level between Webster and its workforce and business community, but its success also depends on coordination with regional and state entities.

**Goal 1.** Attract diverse businesses to Main Street and East/South Main Street through investments in commercial and mixed-use properties.

- Activate Main Street and improve sidewalk culture by attracting retail and restaurant businesses to downtown Webster.
- Facilitate mixed-use development in areas with high residential density, especially near Main Street.
- Preserve the cultural and historic value of downtown buildings such as the Sitkowski School.

**Goal 2.** Improve and upgrade Webster’s active industrial corridor.

- Establish a coordinated permitting and design review process to streamline the location or expansion of businesses along Cudworth Road.
- Facilitate improvements to roadways, stormwater, and natural infrastructure along Cudworth Road.

**Goal 3.** Support regional efforts to connect workers to jobs in the region.

- Continue to support the Central Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board (CMWIB) in its provision of training programs that prepare youth for the workforce, such as Connecting Activities, Youth Works, and Job One.
- Continue to support the Central Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board (CMWIB) in its provision of training and workforce development programs that connect unemployed workers to job opportunities through the Workforce Central Career Center.
- Continue to provide public services that support residents of Webster who work in other communities, including providing a range of housing options; maintaining adequate infrastructure and public services; and improving the quality of public education.

**Goal 4.** Develop capacity for the use of federal/state programs and grants for economic development.

- Support public-private collaboration through the use of syndication, tax incentives and credits, such as the Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit.
- Facilitate the redevelopment and the adaptive reuse of existing structures through the use of public and quasi-public resources such as LISC and CDBG grants, Redevelopment Authority funds, Urban Renewal, MassDevelopment, and the Massachusetts Historical Commission.
- Investigate the use of MassDEP’s brownfields program incentives for the cleanup and redevelopment of potentially contaminated properties along East Main Street and South Main Street.

**Goal 5.** Promote local tourism that capitalizes on Webster’s natural resources, cultural assets and local entertainment venues.

- Improve marketing of local events at Indian Ranch, Memorial Beach, and the French River. (See list of annual events in *Chapter 6 - Open Space and Recreation*)

- Improving overall marketing efforts including the enhancement of gateways on I-395 and Route 16 through the use of signage.

### ***Past Planning Efforts***

The economic development goals of this Comprehensive Plan were developed with public engagement during the master plan process, and are also based on goals from other recent planning efforts. Relevant objectives from Webster's Open Space and Recreation Plan, Community Development Strategy, and the Central Mass Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) are provided in this section.

#### **Webster Comprehensive Plan (1989)**

The current Webster Comprehensive Plan, published in 1989, presents goals that include locating industry in close proximity to infrastructure and major transportation routes, and encouraging commercial development that is compatible with surrounding residential uses. Additionally, the Plan recommends developing a mixed use business development overlay district.

Since 1989, business growth has continued on the I-395 and Route 16 corridors. To support downtown revitalization, the Town adopted a Redevelopment Overlay District in 2008 (§ 650-24 of the zoning bylaw), whose purpose is to “encourage the redevelopment and reuse of existing nonresidential buildings, to preserve the character and historic built form of Webster's central business district, to protect the value of property, and to create opportunities for housing within walking distance of goods and services.”

#### **Webster Community Development Strategy (2010)**

The 2010 Community Development Strategy of Webster was last updated in early 2013, with an economic development objective, “To reinvigorate Webster's declining downtown central business district and foster economic development growth by supporting new and existing local businesses.”

The strategy highlights six priority community development activities. The highest priorities among them include the redevelopment of the former Sitkowski School, the revitalization of the downtown business district, and the design and development of recreational facilities on the French River. Since 2010, the \$19.2 million Sitkowski School redevelopment into a senior citizen housing complex and new Senior Center for the Town has proceeded with State assistance, including a Massachusetts Historic

Rehabilitation Tax Credit. Additionally, the construction of the Webster Riverwalk on the French River is currently underway.

**Table 4.1 Priority Projects Identified in the 2010 Community Development Strategy**

| Priority Level | Community Development Activities  |
|----------------|---|
| HIGH           | Disposition/redevelopment of the former Sitkowski School  |
| HIGH           | Revitalization of the downtown business district  |
| HIGH           | Upgraded infrastructure in established neighborhood areas<br>Improving condition of housing stock in target area                  |
| MED-HIGH       | Planning/design/development for public access/riverwalk to French River<br>Improvement/expansion of recreation facilities         |
| MED            | Expansion of Corbin Library   |
| MED            | Jobs and related support services to lower income and low-skilled residents, especially those with limited transportation options |

Source: 2010 Webster Community Development Strategy (updated - FY13 Mini-Entitlement Plan Application)

Economic development action items from the Community Development Strategy are listed below:

1. Completing planning, market, feasibility and other technical studies/reports as preliminary steps to actual redevelopment activities by utilizing a variety of resources, including private funding, Redevelopment Authority funds, Urban Renewal, MassDevelopment, LISC and CDBG grants.
2. Directing investment in downtown commercial and mixed use properties, utilizing private funds, syndication, tax incentives and credits, and public and quasi-public resources such as CDBG and MassDevelopment.
3. Improving public infrastructure, gateways, amenities and parking facilities, using private and local public funds and public grants such as CDBG and MassWorks.
4. Redeveloping vacant or underutilized municipal, industrial, commercial properties and vacant sites such the former Sitkowski School, Cranston Print Works, Anglo Fabrics Mill Complex and parcels along the South Main Street Gateway to downtown, utilizing private investment, tax incentives and credits, and public and quasi-public resources such as CDBG, MassDevelopment, EDA, 108, Brownfields grants and local funds. The redevelopment of the Sitkwoski is underway and the Cranston Print Works site is being redeveloped.
5. Improving the housing stock within and adjacent to the central business district, utilizing private funds, tax incentives and credits, and public and quasi-public resources such CDBG, HIF, HOME, MHIC.

6. Supporting efforts to foster the stewardship of and improve public access to the French River and encouraging environmentally appropriate development adjacent to it, especially where the river runs through downtown, using private, local town and available state and federal grant funds. The planning and development of a riverfront park and Riverwalk are objectives supporting this initiative. The 2011 completion of the French River Park represents an important achievement. The planning work funded by the FY12 grant has laid the groundwork to complete the first segment of the Riverwalk in 2013-14.
7. Strengthening the local economy in order to preserve and expand housing affordability. By retaining existing companies and increasing the job base in commercial/industrial sectors that pay competitive wages, Webster can buffer low-income homeowners from high taxes and, at the same time, provide jobs that attract a wider spectrum of incomes.
8. Selective demolition of seriously deteriorated buildings, where the deterioration is so great that rehabilitation is economically infeasible, particularly in view of Webster's weak real estate market. Most, though not all, of these buildings are residential structures. Demolition indirectly supports economic development by removing physical blight, which discourages reinvestment and community renewal. Demolition occurred at several sites in 2012 and 2013.
9. Provide jobs and related skill and job preparation training for lower income residents who need local jobs because of limited transportation options.

#### *Open Space and Recreation Plan (2009)*

Goal F of this plan recommends preserving and enhancing the historic character of downtown Webster through the following two actions:

- Work with property owners to preserve buildings that contribute to the historic look and character of the area
- Encourage the adaptive reuse of existing vacant and underutilized buildings

#### *CMRPC – 2020 Growth Strategy: The Development Framework for Central Massachusetts, 2000; updated 2004*

CMRPC is the regional planning commission for Central Massachusetts. The 2020 Growth Strategy presents several regional “Goals & Policies for Growth” that tie in with Webster’s own goals. These include policies that encourage reinvestment and reuse of brownfield sites, technical workforce training, public-private collaboration, and investments in public infrastructure.

- A. To capitalize on the region's potential for new job creation opportunities.
  - a. Within the City of Worcester and older suburban towns, encourage reinvestment and reuse of sites, especially "brownfield" sites where feasible.
  - b. Provide information about the region's economic development potential through the conduct and maintenance of an industrial site survey.
  - c. Promote economic growth in locations with public utilities that can be developed as clusters or nodes and eventually become linked to public transit.
  - d. Expand and coordinate public and private training programs to enable all members of the region's labor force to improve technical, teamwork and problem solving skills.
  - e. Encourage collaboration among government, industry and public and private institutions in marketing this area as a place where "value" and opportunity can be found.
- B. To provide a basis for public infrastructure investments.
  - a. Identify potential centers of growth and the associated public infrastructure needed for continued development.

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## Economic Profile

This economic profile presents information on the labor force, local and regional economic development efforts, local business establishments and commercial space in Webster, and identifies target industries based on area employment projections. Other less tangible elements such as quality of life and business climate perceptions can also influence local conditions.

### *Labor Force Characteristics*

The labor force in Webster is composed of 9,178 workers, out of 13,551 residents aged 16 and over. Close to one-third of workers (32 percent) are in management, business, science, and arts occupations; 28 percent are in sales and office occupations; and 16 percent are in service occupations. There are approximately 2,000 workers (24 percent) in occupations such as natural resources, construction, maintenance, production, transportation, and the moving of materials. The distribution of occupations in Webster is similar to that of Worcester County; however, Worcester County has a higher percentage

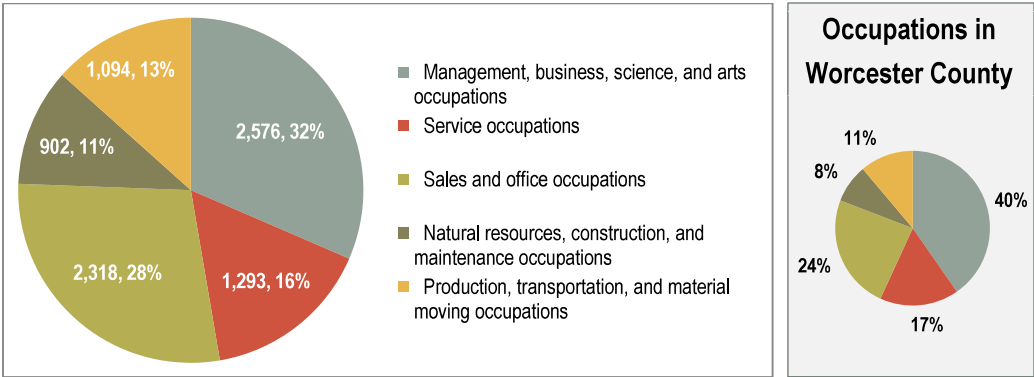
of workers in the management, business, science, and arts occupations—40 percent compared to 32 percent in Webster.

The labor force grew by 13 percent between 2000 and 2011. Underlying this growth is an uneven shift in industries and occupations over the past decade, as manufacturing declined and service-related industries grew across the Town and region.

Webster faces challenges such as unemployment and poverty levels that continue to be higher than the surrounding region. The unemployment rate in Webster was 8.7 percent as of May 2013, compared to 7.5 percent in Worcester County and 6.6 percent in the State. The poverty rate in Webster increased from 12.1 percent in 2011 to 14.0 percent in 2012, compared to an increase from 9.9 percent 10.3 percent in the County.

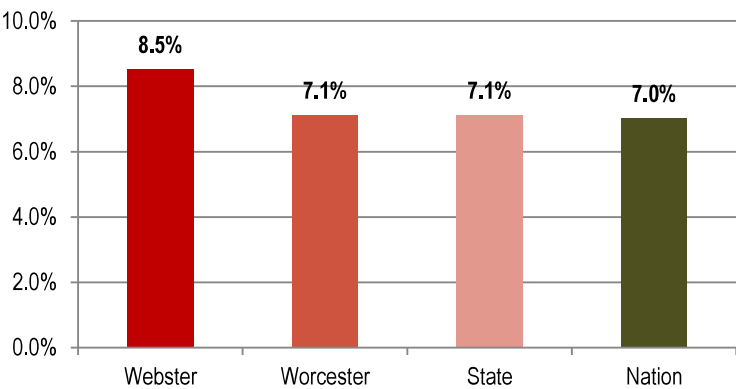
Webster’s workforce differs from that of the County and State in terms of educational attainment. Eighteen percent of adults in Webster over age 25 have a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to 33 percent in the County and 38 percent in the State.

Figure 4.1 Occupations in Webster



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Figure 4.2 Unemployment Rate, November 2013



Note: Worcester refers to the Worcester Metropolitan Statistical Area  
Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

Table 4.2 Educational Attainment (Population 25+)

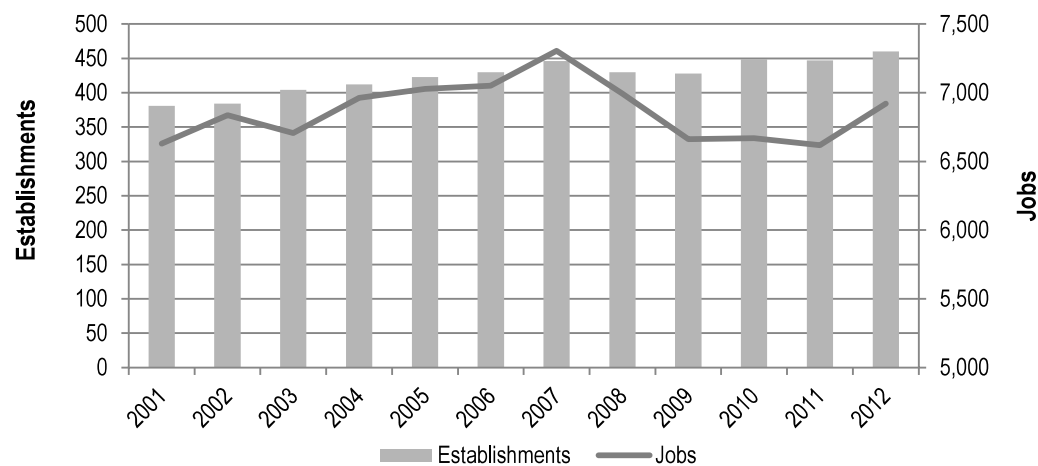
|                             | Webster | Worcester County | State |
|-----------------------------|---------|------------------|-------|
| High School Grad or Higher  | 83.4%   | 88.7%            | 88.9% |
| Bachelor's Degree or Higher | 18.4%   | 33.3%            | 38.7% |

Source U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 ACS 5-Year Estimates

***Business Establishments in Webster***

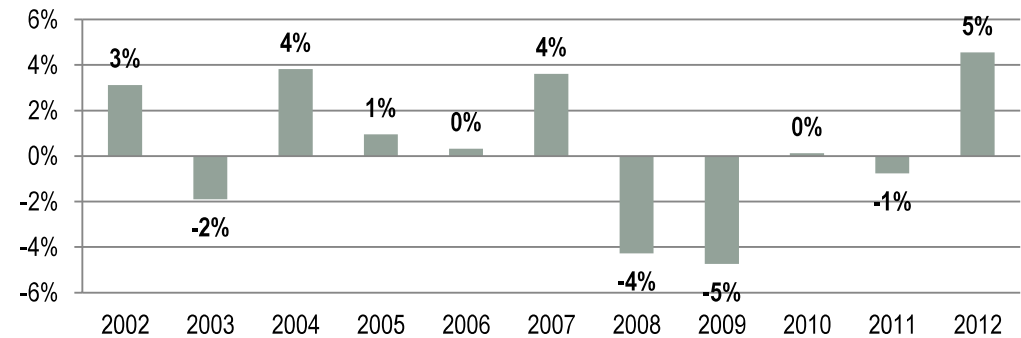
The number of business establishments in Webster has increased modestly over the past decade, reaching 460 business establishments in 2012 from 381 business establishments in 2000. However, the number of jobs has barely kept pace with business growth. The Town saw a five percent increase in jobs between 2011 and 2012, suggesting that an economic recovery may be on the horizon if such an increase can be sustained over time.

Figure 4.3 Establishments and Jobs, 2011-2012



Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, 2001-2012  
Note - will not sum due to exclusions of some NAICS codes from Service-producing domain

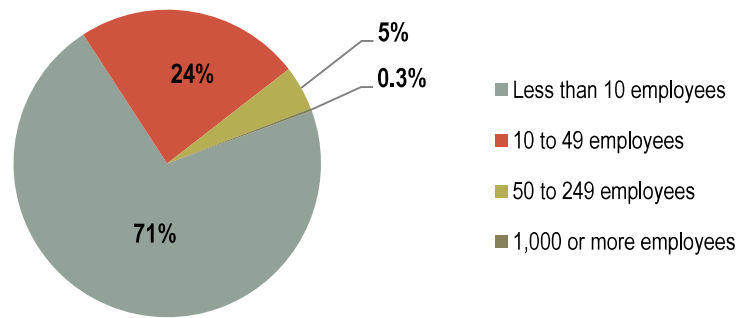
Figure 4.4 Change in Jobs, 2012



Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, 2012 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter

The small business community is important to Webster’s local economy. Most of Webster’s businesses have fewer than ten employees; in fact, over half of business establishments in Webster have fewer than five employees.

**Figure 4.5 Business Establishment Size, 2012**



Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, 2012 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter

Webster's local economy has evolved into a service-based economy, although manufacturing still has a presence on Cudworth Road. The industries with the greatest representation in the business community include miscellaneous service industries, as well as the following:

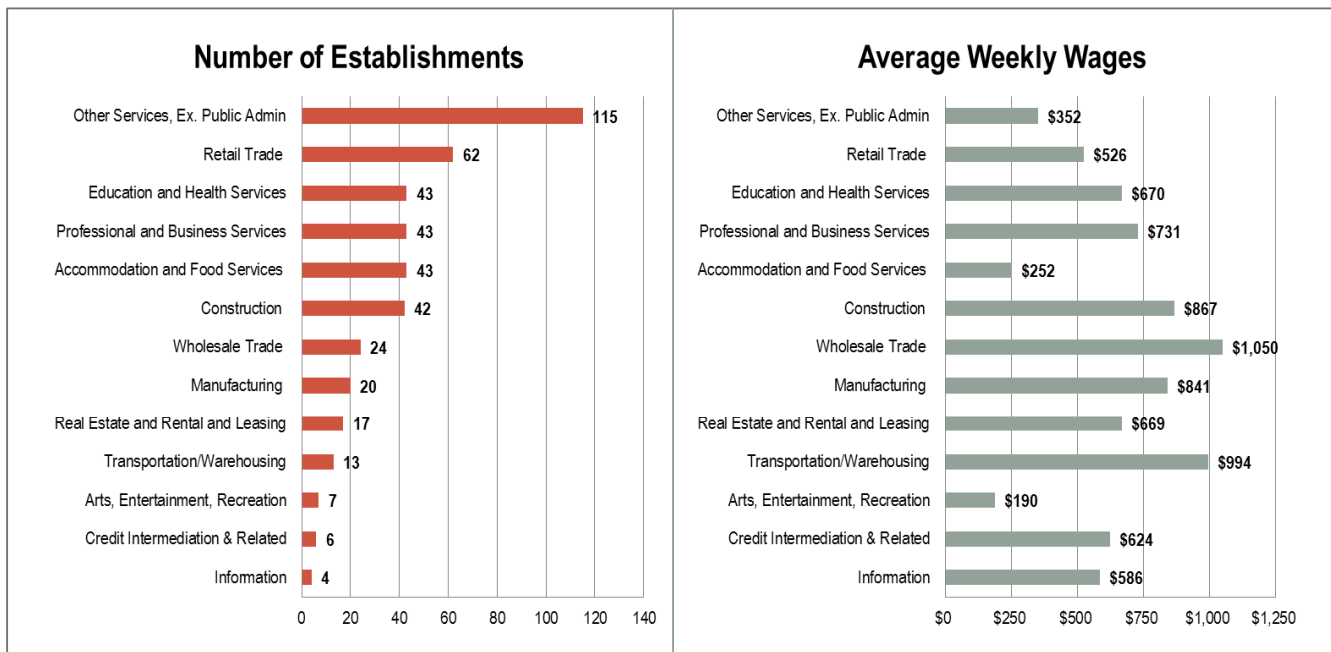
- Retail trade
- Education and health services
- Professional and business services
- Accommodation and food services
- Construction

The top employing industries in Webster include a range of income levels, based on the average weekly wages shown below. The top five industries range from an average weekly wage of \$252 in accommodation and food services (\$13,104 per annum) to \$731 in the professional and business services (\$38,012 per annum), with an average annual employment of 648 and 979 workers, respectively. Webster has a median household income of \$38,169 and median family income of \$48,898.

The retail trade industries, with an average weekly wage of \$670 (\$27,352 per annum), are the single top employing industry group in Webster, with an average monthly employment of 861 workers. Education and healthcare services, which employ an average of 1,204 workers per month, have an average annual wage of \$34,840.

The highest paying industries, wholesale trade, transportation and warehousing, and construction, represent a lower number of establishments and represent average monthly employment of approximately 518 workers as of 2012 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter.

**Figure 4.6 Business Establishments and Average Weekly Wages, 2012 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter**



Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, 2012 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter

The top employing industries in Webster, based on information from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, are Education and Health Services, Professional and Business Services, Retail Trade, and Accommodation and Food Services.

The prominent industries in a town like Webster are closely tied to large employers. Manufacturing, once Webster's largest employing industry, now accounts for five percent of employment. Goya Foods, Webster's largest industrial company, employs several hundred workers on its campus on Cudworth Road.



Goya Foods

The Education and Health Services industries account for almost one out of five workers (17.4 percent) based on average monthly employment. This includes the teachers and staff of Bartlett High School; Harrington Healthcare, which maintains a comprehensive outpatient facility in Webster; the Oakwood Rehab and Nursing Center; Lanessa Extended Care, a 96-bed accredited healthcare facility; and the VNA of Southern Worcester County, which provides home health care services.



Mapfre Commerce Insurance Campus

Professional and Business Services account for 14 percent of employment in Webster. With over 1,000 employees, MAPFRE Commerce Insurance is by far the largest employer in Webster. The company provides auto, business, and homeowner insurance in 16 states across the country. In Webster, MAPFRE Commerce maintains a campus at the intersection of Route 395 and Gore Road and another office on Main Street in downtown Webster.

Other businesses employing over 100 workers at their Webster locations include transportation and distribution companies, as well as the regional and national retail chains. AA Transportation provides limousine services, and warehousing/distribution companies include LKQ (auto parts) and Guardian (glass products).

**Table 4.3 Large Employers in Webster, 2012**

| 1000+ Employees                         |                               | 100+ Employees           |  |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Personal, Auto, and Homeowner Insurance | MAPFRE USA Commerce Insurance | Education                | Bartlett Jr./Sr. High School   |
|   |                               | Food                     | Goya Foods<br>Harrington Healthcare  |
|   |                               | Healthcare               | Lanessa Extended Care<br>Oakwood Rehab and Nursing Center<br>VNA – Southern Worcester County |
|   |                               | Retail                   | Kmart<br>Price Chopper   |
|   |                               | Transportation           | A A Transportation   |
|   |                               | Warehousing/Distribution | Guardian Webster<br>LKQ Route 16 Auto Parts  |

Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, 2012 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter



New Price Chopper plaza

### *Key Industries in Webster*

Webster has experienced economic growth over the past decade, in spite of serious setbacks from the Great Recession. Based on information from the 2011 American Community Survey and 2000 Census, the highest-employing industries in Webster are as follows and are shown in Figure 4.7:

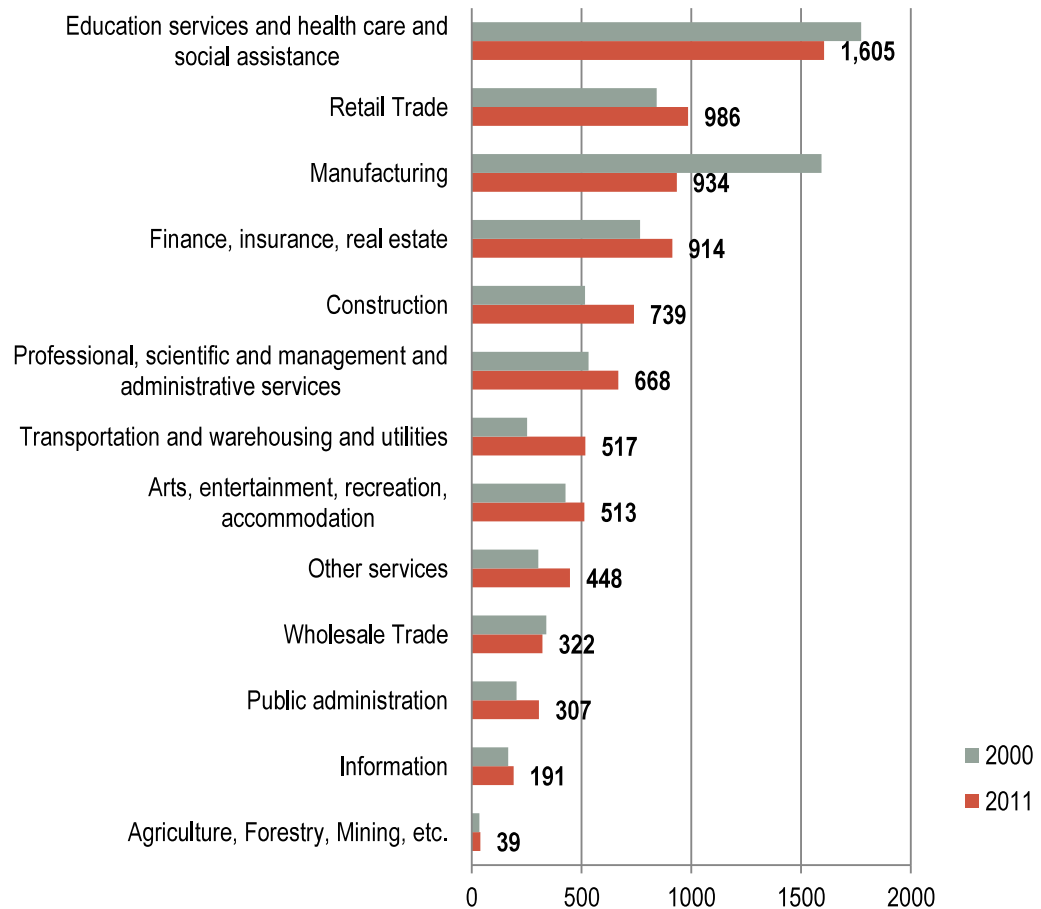
- Education services and health care and social assistance
- Retail trade
- Manufacturing
- Finance, insurance, real estate

Employment in some industries has grown more than in others over the past decade. Fewer jobs are available today in manufacturing, wholesale trade, and education and health services than in 2000. Most notably, manufacturing commanded close to 1,600 jobs in 2000, but only 934 jobs by 2011—a 41 percent decrease. This decrease in manufacturing jobs has contributed to the unemployment observed in Webster today.

Education services, health care, and social assistance were Webster's highest employing industries between 2006 and 2011. These industries still account for one out of five workers, in spite of a ten percent drop in employment since 2000. Additionally, retail and the finance, insurance, and real estate industries have shown modest growth, employing close to 1,000 workers each in 2011.

At the same time, employment in construction and the transportation, warehousing, and utilities industries has also increased. Webster's location along I-395, leading north to the City of Worcester, and Route 16, which leads through Greater Boston, has been complementary to growth in its industrial corridor.

**Figure 4.7 Growth in Employment by Industry, 2000-2011**



Source U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Note: These estimates are not directly comparable to MA EOLWD estimates of average monthly employment estimates due to differences in data collection methods and the aggregation of industries.

**Table 4.4 Employment by Industry, 2000-2011**

| Employment by Industry  | 2000  | 2011  | Percent of Total, 2011 | Absolute Change, 2000-2011 | Percent change, 2000-2011 |
|---|-------|-------|------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Labor force   | 8,127 | 9,178 | -                      | 1,051                      | 12.9%                     |
| Employed population over 16   | 7,752 | 8,183 | 100%                   | 431                        | 5.6%                      |
| Education services and health care and social assistance            | 1,773 | 1,605 | 20%                    | -168                       | -9.5%                     |
| Retail trade  | 842   | 986   | 12%                    | 144                        | 17.1%                     |
| Manufacturing   | 1,593 | 934   | 11%                    | -659                       | -41.4%                    |
| Finance, insurance, real estate                                     | 767   | 914   | 11%                    | 147                        | 19.2%                     |
| Construction  | 516   | 739   | 9%                     | 223                        | 43.2%                     |
| Professional, scientific and management and administrative services | 532   | 668   | 8%                     | 136                        | 25.6%                     |
| Transportation and warehousing and utilities                        | 252   | 517   | 6%                     | 265                        | 105.2%                    |
| Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation                      | 427   | 513   | 6%                     | 86                         | 20.1%                     |
| Other services  | 303   | 448   | 5%                     | 145                        | 47.9%                     |
| Wholesale trade   | 340   | 322   | 4%                     | -18                        | -5.3%                     |
| Public administration   | 205   | 307   | 4%                     | 102                        | 49.8%                     |
| Information   | 167   | 191   | 2%                     | 24                         | 14.4%                     |
| Agriculture, forestry, mining, etc.                                 | 35    | 39    | 0%                     | 4                          | 11.4%                     |

Source U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Note: These estimates are not directly comparable to MA EOLWD estimates of average monthly employment estimates due to differences in data collection methods and the aggregation of industries.

## ***Regional Economic Development Resources***

### **Webster Dudley Oxford Chamber of Commerce**

The Chamber of Commerce is affiliated with the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce, and offers services including health and dental insurance, networking and referral opportunities, and advertising and sponsorship. The Chamber also hosts events and participates in advocacy efforts related to economic development, training and education, and business resource assistance in the region. The membership directly lists 142 members, over half of which are located in Webster.

### **Central Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board (CMWIB)**

The CMWIB serves the City of Worcester and 37 surrounding communities in Central Massachusetts. The CMWIB seeks to “ensure individuals have the skills necessary to

meet the demands of area employers, and to also ensure that employers have access to these skilled individuals.”

The CMWIB oversees the Workforce Central Career Center which has branches in Worcester, Southbridge, and Milford; develops the local workforce strategic plan; allocates federal and state training funds to companies and community based organizations; and assists with state grants for the training or retraining of employees at local companies. The CMWIB has an Executive Committee, as well as three active committees focused on Youth Workforce Investment, Adult Career Services, and Cultural Competency.

Of particular interest to Webster is the Youth Workforce programming offered through CMWIB. CMWIB sponsors its own programs; however funding was not allocated in FY2012. CMWIB also administers non-WIA programs throughout the Central MA region and is planning to provide youth orientations at the Workforce Central Career Centers. Youth programs include the following:

- The school-to-career Connecting Activities program promotes and coordinates work-based learning opportunities and career development activities for high school students.
- The YouthWorks summer youth employment program offers subsidized employment opportunities to youth between ages 14 and 21 in designated central Massachusetts communities, including Webster.
- JobOne; an initiative to promote youth work experience and employer involvement in youth education through an outreach campaign to connect employers with schools/youth training programs.

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## Economic Outlook

This section discusses the economic outlook in Webster through a review of employment projections provided by the Mass Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development for the Central Massachusetts Workforce Investment Area (CMWIA). Economic development opportunities uncovered during the public input process are also considered.

### *Target Industries in Webster*

Employment projections show that the primary industries in Webster are expected to grow on a region-wide basis between 2010 and 2020. These include healthcare, insurance, food manufacturing, and wholesale trade. In addition to high-employing industries, the perception of a vibrant community and livability are important to improving the economic development outlook. As a result, although employment projections are not provided, local tourism and the preservation, enhancement, and marketing of Webster's natural and cultural assets are also considered a target industry.

Target industries for Webster, based on the economic profile, employment projections, and public input, include the following:

- Healthcare and social assistance
- Insurance carriers
- Food manufacturing
- Wholesale trade
- Local tourism

### *Employment Projections for Central Massachusetts*

This section reviews 2020 employment projections for Webster's key industries—healthcare, insurance, food manufacturing, and wholesale trade. Overall the industries with the strongest presence in Webster are expected to grow between 2010 and 2020. Given the longstanding presence of these industries in Webster, the Town should actively seek to retain and capture some of this growth.

Region-wide, healthcare and social assistance is expected to grow by over 11,000 jobs (26 percent) between 2010 and 2020. Webster currently has four major healthcare employers providing outpatient services, nursing, and residential care. While Webster does not have the major hospitals or research institutions present in nearby municipalities

or the City of Worcester, the Town has a foundation for maintaining or capturing some of this growth.

Growth in the healthcare industry will be partly driven by a projected 3,157 jobs in ambulatory healthcare services, i.e., outpatient services like those offered at Harrison Healthcare. Another 2,880 jobs are expected in nursing and residential care facilities like Lanessa and Oakwood, a 27 percent increase from existing employment of 10,726 workers across the region in 2010. Similar growth rates are expected in employment in hospitals and social services.

Insurance carriers and related activities are expected to add 1,620 jobs in the region, increasing from 7,852 jobs to 9,472 jobs by 2020 (a 21 percent increase). As one of epicenters for employment in the insurance industry in Central Massachusetts, Webster is likely to capture some of this growth.

Food manufacturing is expected to grow modestly by approximately 140 jobs (a 24 percent increase) from 596 jobs to 738 jobs in the region. Likewise, wholesale trade is expected to grow by 1,786 jobs (19 percent), as employment with merchant wholesalers of durable goods is expected to dip slightly (2.9 percent). Warehousing and storage, a related industry, is expected to grow by 17.9 percent or approximately 300 jobs over the next few years.

The industrial corridor along Cudworth Road is suitable for continuing to support the manufacturing and wholesale trade industry, as long as prudent investments in public infrastructure and services enable businesses to thrive. The growth and expansion of any industry relies in part on construction, another industry with a significant presence in Webster. Construction employment is expected to increase by 15.6 percent or 1,252 jobs, as construction and development continues to recover from the Great Recession.

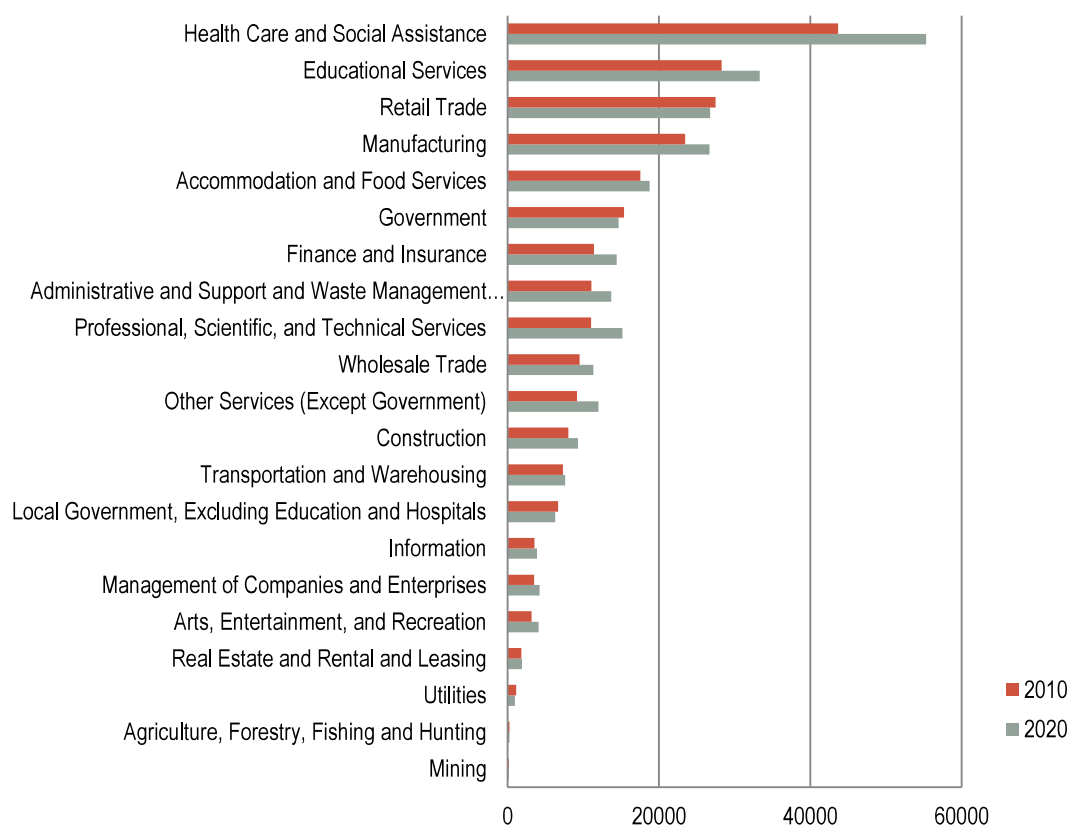
**Table 4.5 Regional Employment Projections by Industry, 2010-2020**

| Employment by Industry  | 2010           | 2020<br>(Projected) | Percent of<br>Total, 2020 | Change,<br>2010-2010 | % Change,<br>2010-2020 |
|---|----------------|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Total All Industries</b>                                     | <b>253,299</b> | <b>292,369</b>      | <b>0.1%</b>               | <b>39,070</b>        | <b>15.4%</b>           |
| Health Care and Social Assistance                               | 43,685         | 55,316              | 1.40%                     | 11,631               | 26.60%                 |
| Educational Services  | 28,285         | 33,328              | 18.90%                    | 5,043                | 17.80%                 |
| Retail Trade  | 27,465         | 26,764              | 2.60%                     | -701                 | -2.60%                 |
| Manufacturing   | 23,464         | 26,689              | 3.90%                     | 3,225                | 13.70%                 |
| Accommodation & Food Services                                   | 17,547         | 18,779              | 4.10%                     | 1,232                | 7.00%                  |
| Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services                | 11,035         | 15,190              | 1.40%                     | 4,155                | 37.70%                 |
| Government  | 15,374         | 14,686              | 2.20%                     | -688                 | -4.50%                 |
| Finance and Insurance   | 11,419         | 14,394              | 0.60%                     | 2,975                | 26.10%                 |
| Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation | 11,063         | 13,688              | 11.40%                    | 2,625                | 23.70%                 |
| Other Services (Except Government)                              | 9,186          | 11,986              | 5.00%                     | 2,800                | 30.50%                 |
| Wholesale Trade   | 9,524          | 11,310              | 9.20%                     | 1,786                | 18.80%                 |
| Construction  | 8,032          | 9,284               | 9.10%                     | 1,252                | 15.60%                 |
| Transportation and Warehousing                                  | 7,290          | 7,614               | 1.30%                     | 324                  | 4.40%                  |
| Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals             | 6,673          | 6,292               | 0.10%                     | -381                 | -5.70%                 |
| Management of Companies and Enterprises                         | 3,497          | 4,204               | 4.70%                     | 707                  | 20.20%                 |
| Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation                               | 3,181          | 4,112               | 6.40%                     | 931                  | 29.30%                 |
| Information   | 3,526          | 3,886               | 4.90%                     | 360                  | 10.20%                 |
| Real Estate and Rental and Leasing                              | 1,809          | 1,900               | 5.20%                     | 91                   | 5.00%                  |
| Utilities   | 1,124          | 986                 | 3.20%                     | -138                 | -12.30%                |
| Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting                      | 244            | 240                 | 0.10%                     | -4                   | -1.60%                 |
| Mining  | 144            | 152                 | 0.30%                     | 8                    | 5.60%                  |

Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, 2013.

Note: These estimates are not directly comparable to 2011 ACS estimates of annual monthly employment estimates due to differences in data collection methods and the aggregation of industries.

**Figure 4.8 Regional Employment Projections by Industry, 2010-2020**



Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, 2013.

### Enhancing Natural and Cultural Assets

Indian Ranch and Memorial Beach are two of Webster's key cultural assets and contribute to quality of life perceptions for the Town. Indian Ranch, located on the east shore of Lake Webster off of Route 16, is a lakeside outdoor amphitheater that hosts a variety of music and entertainment events throughout the year, including its Summer Concert Series which includes events on a weekly basis. The Town has expressed interest in continuing to improve upon infrastructure challenges



Indian Ranch

to the east side of Lake Webster. Likewise, improving public facilities on Memorial Beach will enhance its attractiveness to local and regional visitors. (See Open Space and Recreation plan element for more information on local events and marketing.)

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## **Economic Development Recommendations**

### ***Downtown and Main Commercial Corridors Revitalization***

The Town should consider design guidelines for new construction, including redevelopment and adaptive reuse, in the downtown area and along the main commercial corridors. Design guidelines can be established as part of the zoning bylaw and/or as a stand-alone set of parameters relating to the appearance, size and placement of buildings on the development parcel. Different guidelines should be prepared for the downtown area (which has an urban development pattern) and East Main Street (which has a suburban development pattern).

- Amend the zoning bylaw to encourage more mixed use development and consider design guidelines for new construction, including redevelopment and adaptive reuse, in the downtown area and along the main commercial corridors. Mixed use development, especially if there is a residential component to it, will bring more people into the downtown area to help support local businesses. Incentives and bonuses could be considered if developers meet certain objectives in terms of land uses or design elements.
- Similarly, the Town could consider establishing zoning incentives to encourage reinvestment and redevelopment of existing properties, particularly historic buildings. Such incentives could include density bonuses.
- Permit flexible use and live/work space in downtown Webster to encourage new businesses, start-ups and non-profits to locate there.
- Continue to make improvements to the downtown infrastructure including streets and sidewalks, streetscape and pedestrian linkages, benches and other such amenities, lighting, open space and greening, signage (way-finding system) and parking to make it more attractive for residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Re-establish the storefront and facade improvement program. The Town had such a program in the past, which can help to improve the appearance of the storefronts in both the downtown area and along main commercial corridors.

- Consider shared parking to help reduce the parking burden on new or redevelopment where land uses have different peak periods, especially in mixed use developments. This can serve as an incentive to redevelop in downtown Webster.

### ***Local Tourism***

- Continue the ongoing effort to capitalize on the potential of the French River in light of its proximity to downtown Webster by providing connections through easements between downtown businesses and the River. The River Walk is under development and it presents the Town with a great opportunity to attract visitors for local businesses. Enhance connections with the French River, such as with a series of boat launch points, and look for ways to capitalize on its proximity to downtown Webster.
- Continue to create and expand opportunities for more entertainment, markets, sidewalk sales, and cultural events in the downtown area and throughout the Town such as Harvest Fest, Winter Wonderland, and the Summer Concert Series.
- Continue the historic signage efforts to promote and link cultural and historical assets.
- Continue to highlight Webster Lake, Indian Ranch, Memorial Beach, the French River and the Town's other scenic, cultural and historical landmarks and assets as a true regional resources for social and cultural opportunities.

### ***General Permitting and Business Development***

- Ensure that the permitting process is transparent, prompt, reasonable, and consistent. Create a guidance document to assist new and expanding businesses through the permitting process. New and existing businesses need to know what is entailed in the permitting process and how long it will take. Developing and distributing (hard copy and on the Town website) a permitting guide should identify the permits needed for specific types of businesses, how the permits can be obtained, how long the process may take, and where to go for assistance and information. Numerous communities have prepared permitting guides and the Commonwealth has resources available as well to provide technical assistance.
- Conduct outreach efforts within the business community to ensure that the needs of existing businesses are fully addressed. Coordinate with the Webster Dudley Oxford Chamber of Commerce, Webster Dudley Business Alliance, and the Central Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board regarding business retention and workforce development issues. To enhance business retention, conduct regular

business roundtable discussions to talk about their needs and labor force issues. This is critical not only for large, but also small businesses.

- Reach out to key employers in Webster such as MAPFRE Commerce Insurance, Goya Foods, and Harrington Healthcare to ensure that their issues and needs are addressed to the best of the Town's ability so that they can flourish in Webster.
- Support vocational and technical training to prepare students for jobs that Webster would like to attract and retain. The curriculum could include practical business and vocational skills to provide a local labor force to support the Town's larger employers.